

BREAST SELF EXAMINATION

WHY IS A BREAST SELF EXAMINATION IMPORTANT?

The American Cancer Society believes that Breast Self Examination (BSE) is an important step for reducing the breast cancer death rate. Finding breast cancer as early as possible greatly improves the chances that treatment will be successful.

BSE is suggested for women starting at age 20, coupled with a clinical breast exam every three years for women in their 20s and every year for women 40 and over. Women are advised to begin having yearly mammograms at age 40. Monthly breast self-exams only take a few minutes to perform and include a visual and manual exam of each breast.

HOW TO PERFORM A BREAST SELF EXAM:

The best time for breast self-examination (BSE) is about a week after your period ends, when your breasts are not tender or swollen. If you are not having regular periods, do a BSE on the same day every month.

- 1)** Lie down with a pillow under your right shoulder and place your right arm behind your head.
- 2)** Use the finger pads of the three middle fingers on your left hand to feel for lumps in the right breast.
- 3)** Press firmly enough to know how your breast feels. A solid ridge in the lower curve of each breast is normal.
- 4)** Move around the breast in a circular, up and down line, or wedge pattern. Be sure to do this the same way every time. Check the entire breast area, and remember how your breast feels from month to month.
- 5)** Move the pillow under your left shoulder. Follow the same exam steps for the left breast using the finger pads of the right hand.

Repeat the examination of both breasts while standing, with one arm behind your head. The upright position makes it easier to check the upper and outer part of the breasts (toward your armpit). This is where about half of breast cancers are found. You may want to do the standing part of the BSE while you are in the shower. Some breast changes can be felt more easily when your skin is wet and soapy.

WHAT TO FEEL AND LOOK FOR DURING A BREAST SELF-EXAM:

While doing a breast self examination, look and feel for changes, such as:

- Dimpling of the skin
- Changes in the nipple
- Redness
- Swelling
- Changes in skin texture
- Retraction or indentations of the nipple
- Abnormal discharge from the nipple
- Puckering

If there are any changes contact a health care provider.

Readability:

Ease – 72.7

Grade - 7